

**TRAVELS WITH ODYSSEUS: UNCOMMON WISDOM
FROM HOMER'S ODYSSEY**

Michael J. Goldberg

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Reviewed by Tom Condon

In his enduring bestselling books *He, She, and We*, Jungian analyst Robert Johnson took various myths as jumping-off points to explore modern masculinity, femininity, and relationships. Enneagram author Michael Goldberg takes a similar approach in *Travels with Odysseus: Uncommon Wisdom from Homer's Odyssey*, offering an entertaining analysis of Homer's still-relevant Greek classic, distilled through the filter of the Enneagram and Goldberg's own unique, perceptive sensibilities.

The Odyssey is a "meta story," an early and for its time complete version of what Joseph Campbell called "the hero's journey," first popularized in his book, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*. Such stories—found in the literature of most developed cultures—are always about spiritual and psychological transformation. As Goldberg says, the point of *The Odyssey* as both a narrative and a transformative myth is to help us "return Home." Since ancient times, Goldberg explains, "*The Odyssey* has been known as the journey that each one of us – having been out and about, struggling one way or another, pretending to be this and that – must take to return Home, to who we really are and what we are supposed to become."

In its own quirky way, *Travels with Odysseus* is a self-help book, packed with practical insights and wisdom for modern living. While its rich treatment of the mythological story and its psychological interpretation may sound academic, the book's style is light, casual, and approachable. Goldberg binds his insights to tangible real-world experiences, tying the mythic to the present reality of the reader's life. There are many helpful ideas about what to do when you meet these mythic figures in modern garb on the street, on the job, or in the mirror.

Like all good books, *Travels with Odysseus* does what it talks about. If you give yourself over to its rhythms and insights, the book will take you on Odysseus' journey while offering tools and tips to smooth your passage. Somewhat uncannily Goldberg finds all nine Enneagram styles among the mythic figures that Odysseus encounters on his way home.

While *Travels* is a universe away from Goldberg's business book, *The 9 Ways of Working*, both are smart, insightful, and well-written. This new book is rich with metaphor, allegory, and allusion. The Enneagram goes unnamed, but anyone who knows the system will spot it on every page. As is usual with these source stories,

The Odyssey is exceedingly sexist, so women have to read even a treatment of it differently from men.

The word for this book is “chewy.” *Travels with Odysseus* is a slim, nourishing book that seems longer than it is; you may find yourself picking it up and putting it down to savor and digest what you read. Rush to order this book – then read it slowly and discover the many levels it will work on you.